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Subject: Statement to Employees by CIA Director Leon Panetta on the Death of Usama Bin Ladin

This morning, CIA Director Leon E. Panetta sent the following message to Agency employees:

Today, we have rid the world of the most infamous terrorist of our time. A US strike team stormed a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan and killed Usama Bin Ladin. Thankfully, no Americans were lost, and every effort was taken to avoid civilian casualties.

Nothing will ever compensate for the pain and suffering inflicted by this mass murderer and his henchmen. But just as evil never rests, neither does good. May the fact that Usama Bin Ladin no longer inhabits the earth be a source of comfort for the thousands of families, here in America and around the globe, who mourn the victims of al-Qa'ida's barbarity.

Within our Agency family, our thoughts turn to those who died fighting to make this day possible. Our brothers and sisters who gave their lives in the war against al-Qa'ida—from Mike Spann to our heroes at Khawst—are with us, in memory and spirit, at this joyful moment. In all that we do, they are our constant inspiration.

My deepest thanks and congratulations go out to the officers of our CounterTerrorism Center and Office of South Asia Analysis for their outstanding expertise, amazing creativity, and excellent tradecraft. I also extend my profound appreciation and absolute respect to the strike team, whose great skill and courage brought our nation this historic triumph.

The raid was the culmination of intense and tireless effort on the part of many dedicated Agency officers over many years. Our men and women designed highly complex, innovative, and forward-leaning clandestine operations that led us to Bin Ladin. One operation would yield intelligence that was carefully analyzed and then used to drive further operations. Along with our partners at NGA, NSA, and ODNI, we applied the full range of our capabilities, collecting intelligence through both human and technical means and subjecting it to the most rigorous analysis by our government's leading experts on Bin Ladin and his organization.

Persistent hard work produced the results that the American people expect of their intelligence service: We gave President Obama and his team accurate, relevant, timely intelligence—providing the information and insight they needed at key points as this mission developed. I offered my personal thanks to the President for his willingness to make the courageous decision to proceed with the operation.

Though Bin Ladin is dead, al-Qa'ida is not. The terrorists almost certainly will attempt to avenge him, and we must—and will—remain vigilant and resolute. But we have struck a heavy blow against the enemy. The only leader they have ever known, whose hateful vision gave rise to their atrocities, is no more. The supposedly uncatchable one has been caught and killed. And we will not rest until every last one of them has been delivered to justice.

Remember how you felt in the anxious hours after the attacks of September 11th, and how our Agency vowed to run to ground a vicious foe. Whether you were here at the time or were inspired to serve at CIA in the months and years that followed, take heart in knowing that our Agency is doing its essential job for the American people, and for all humanity. A promise has been kept. And a war will be won.

God bless the United States of America.

Leon E. Panetta